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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY Iran

SUBJECT **Opium Addiction**

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1. Bearing the common habit of the Eastern people, who seek in opium the best consolation in life, nearly two and a half million of Iran's estimated 17,000,000 population are opium addicts, according to reliable sources as the official figure is unobtainable.
2. According to international investigations, Iran is probably the second largest illicit opium supplier in the world next to China.
3. Strangely enough, the opium is the source of both good and evil in Iran--good in the eyes of the backward rural classes and the old-fashioned feudal and semi-feudal landowners who use the opium not only as narcotics but as pain-killing drug, and find it the remedy for all their indispositions. Evil it is for all modern Iranians who see the root of a great part of their compatriots' laziness and inefficiencies in opium addiction, and fighting against this evil has become their solemn duty.
4. In theory, the government exercises a strict monopoly over the trade of the raw opium inside the country, and also any export of the opium should be effected through a special government agency, which deals with marketing the product in the countries where it is largely used in drugs. The cultivation of poppies is out of government control, but it claims an exclusive right in purchasing the crop in the fields. But, in fact, there is a loose control organization, making possible the unencumbered use of the opium in thousands of established dens throughout the country, most of them being run without any serious trouble on behalf of the police and controlling authorities.
5. All this is freely practiced even though the opium smoking is legally forbidden by law passed from the Majlis two years ago, making the infringer liable to six months imprisonment and heavy fines.
6. The most regrettable fact about the opium addiction in Iran is its penetration in the tribes. Ethnologically speaking, the tribes constitute the creamy part of Iran's population, and are considered the most robust specimen of the Iranian race.
7. The production of the opium in Iran, according to the figure published by the International Anti-Narcotic Organization, is 300 tons per year. But this figure is completely fictitious since every Iranian knows that roughly this much is the country's annual export, and moreover this much raw opium is smuggled from Iran to the neighboring countries and Egypt, the international center of the opium smuggling organizations, inconsiderate of the quantity consumed inside the country.

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8. Opium smuggling has been one of the most profitable trades since the early days in the Middle East. Today, anyone succeeding to get into the ring of the internationally-organized smugglers, will be able to make a fabulous fortune in a short period, since one kilogramme smuggled opium from Iran, for instance, to New York fetches roughly seventeen times as much as the original price.
9. The smuggling inside Iran is very prosperous but risky business, as any discovered case brings about the confiscation of the smuggled staff and heavy fines.
10. Despite the law imposing a ban on opium cultivation--which is enacted quite against the will of the government, who is the major profiteer of the opium export, by a group of liberal and progressive-minded deputies--the secret cultivation throughout five major provinces of Iran is in full swing. Poppy plantation is a very profitable business, fetching about \$1,300 per hectare while the wheat brings in about \$600; so there is a strong tendency to grow poppies especially in drier areas where the plantation has a better yield.
11. In the rural areas, where the earnings are generally low, a day's smoke cost almost a day's wage of the poor peasants, and it can be bought rather secretly at the rate of 30¢ for about 3.50 grammes.
12. In the dirty and low-ceilinged dens in Tehran and in other great cities, the opium smokers can be seen sitting cross-legged on the carpeted floors, using a long pipe with small porcelain or China bowl at the end and a piece of charcoal fire constantly burning the opium which must be stuck to the end of the bowl right over a hole made to lead the smoke to the pipe. The charcoal should be kept glowing steadily as the operation goes on, because the opium doesn't burn itself like tobacco. The smoker drinks also a cup of strong tea from time to time during the operation to assuage the dryness and bitterness of the smoke.
13. It is a common practice in the opium infected areas of Iran that the children also get a daily dose to keep them from crying when the working parents go to work; likewise they get an ever-increasing addiction since the early days of life, and in adolescence, they will have every symptom of the physical and mental deficiency.
14. The government has tried many ways to fight against the opium addiction all over the country, but never succeeded to uproot the habit. The hospitals have been set up to cure the addicts, the anti-narcotic drugs and injection services have been provided free of charge to anyone desirous to be cured. But all this has proved to have little effect. There has been only one very rude way of fighting against the evil, which was practiced boldly by the Azarbaijan's so-called "Democrat Party" (Kremlin puppets) during their revolt in 1946, which was merely the shooting of anyone seen smoking or selling opium. The practice proved very effective, it is recorded, as the number of smokers greatly diminished.
15. Beside this cruel way of struggle against the opium addiction, there are small movements that are trying some other ways in this campaign. They suggest the government should set up special prisons to keep the addicts completely locked up from outside under the constant watch of the reliable wardens. They should be kept under the strict diet for at least six months. That is probably the way that the evil can be removed.
16. However costly this method should become for the government, speaking in terms of working efficiency of the people and the deterioration resulting from the opium addiction, the government's loss will be greater if the process of ever increasing habit leads to the steady paralyzation of the body and mind.

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